

Season of Lent

LENT IS THE TIME when many Christians choose to give up something or to focus on something in order to practise spiritual discipline and to get closer to God.

WE try to follow the example of Jesus who spent forty days and forty nights in the desert fasting.

I spent some time studying the scriptures from the Gospel of Matthew concerning the baptism of Jesus and the time he spent in the desert.

I also reflected on the way in which the devil tried to tempt him. The following are my thoughts around these scriptures and the way in which they relate to us as we travel our Lent journeys and as we approach Easter.

Before Jesus goes into the desert, we read about his baptism. Matthew chapter 3 verses 16 & 17 read: *And when Jesus had been baptised, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'*

I like to think that these words that God spoke to Jesus are the same words God speaks to us each day. God longs for us to know that we are his beloved children and that He is pleased with us.

I remember when I was going through an appeal with the Home Office regarding my right to stay in the UK. The process took 2 years during which I was not allowed to work. I spent most of my time at home and so my sleeping pattern changed. I was awake throughout the night and slept throughout the day. After a while, I realised how unhealthy my patterns had become and so I began to look for opportunities to get out of the house and to be active. I began to attend church in Hanham and began to take up small jobs such as painting the inside of the church and printing the church newsletter.

Before these visa issues, I had never thought of going to church at all. Looking back on this experience, I realised that the spirit of God was doing multiple things in my life. The Spirit of God was comforting me during those difficult days, the Spirit was leading me into my calling, and the Spirit was also teaching me how God's love is everlasting.

I began to read my bible at night time and began to place my trust in God more than ever. Through the reading of scripture, I began to learn that my true identity is found in the word of God, rather than what people think about me.

When Jesus was baptised God said: *'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'*

This scripture highlights the importance of identity. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he began with the words, *'If you are the Son of God.'* Satan was trying to get Jesus to question his identity. Jesus always begins his reply with, *'It is written.'* Jesus had knowledge of what was written in the scriptures and therefore Satan was unable to tempt him into questioning his identity followed by doing the wrong thing. It is very difficult to bring down a person who knows their identity. In other words, it is very difficult to bring down a person who knows that they are important to God, that they are loved by God and that God will never leave them no matter what happens in their life.

As we go through our Lent journeys and as we prepare for Easter, my prayer is that we will allow the Holy Spirit to teach us, to comfort us and to continue to remind us that God loves us.

I pray that we will focus on God and that we will find our identity in the words of the bible. Finally, I pray that we may learn to trust God more than ever and lean on him as our supplier and the source of our happiness and joy.

Rev Regan Meares Curate

Mission Partners with St Stephens:

Beloved
Bristol City Centre
Soup Run
Bristol Schools
Connection
Bristol/Uganda Link
Christian Aid
Community of
the Sisters of
the Church
Emmaus
Fair Trade
One25 Project
The Bristol Noise

St Stephens

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Soundwell
Bristol BS16 4RH
0117 956 6257

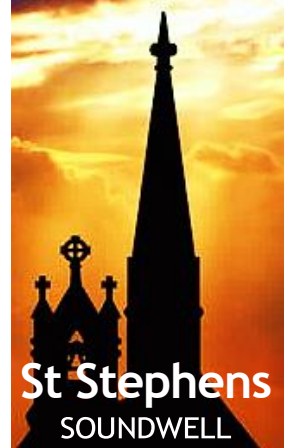
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www.saintstephen
soundwell.org

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soundwell

@SoundwellChurch

CHARITY NUMBER
1131503



Readings & Collects

FOR MARCH 2023

FOR THOSE OF US who are not able to attend services or who wish to use the Sunday readings and Collect Prayer to worship at home, here they are:

SUNDAY 05 MARCH 2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1–4a; Psalm 121

Romans 4:1–5, 13–17; John 3:1–17

ALMIGHTY GOD, by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 12 MARCH 3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:1–7; Psalm 95

Romans 5:1–11; John 4:5–42

ETERNAL GOD, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 19 MARCH Mothering Sunday

1 Samuel 1:20–end; Psalm 34:11–20

2 Corinthians 1:3–7; Luke 2:33–35

GOD OF LOVE, passionate and strong, tender and careful: watch over us and hold us all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY 26 MARCH 5th Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:1–14; Psalm 130

Romans 8:6–11; John 11:1–45

GRACIOUS FATHER, you gave up your Son out of love for the world: lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion, that we may know eternal peace through the shedding of our Saviour's blood, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DEVASTATION & DESTRUCTION IN Turkey/Syrian Earthquake

TODAY, as I am writing this, it is Monday 13th February.

OVER the last week we have seen and heard the most tragic news following a catastrophic earthquake that has affected Southern Turkey and areas of Syria.

A week after the tragic event the death toll passes 35,000 and is expected to double. That depth and magnitude of loss is almost impossible to imagine and is overwhelming for us in how to respond.

Many charities are appealing for donations, financial and otherwise.

Yesterday, was the 2nd Sunday before Lent and the Gospel reading I preached about was from Matthew 6:25–34, a passage entitled 'Do not worry.' I cannot help but contemplate what that means for the people of Turkey and Syria right now.

The first thing that comes to mind is The Lord's Prayer. Why, I'm not totally sure, but what next comes to mind is Luke 11:1–4, where the Disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. And I pondered, what comfort can be gleaned from Jesus' words when we read and hear this inter-action. *Why not look it up and read it yourself now?*

Jesus' disciples, have watched Jesus closely, seen how he modelled a life which followed a different way of being. Many times, they have experienced him retreating to a quiet place, to reset and re-centre himself.

For Jesus it was in prayer that he brought his frustrations, his challenges, his burdens and the burdens he felt for others, to his Heavenly Father. So often when Jesus acted, he responded from a place of compassion, being moved to respond and help those in need. And I believe we need to follow that example.

We live in an age when we can end up suffering with what is now termed 'Compassion Fatigue'.

So, what we must not do is allow ourselves to be neutralised into inaction, but activated, moved to react, and then act to support in any way we realistically can.

It may not feel like much at the time but if we all do our bit then we can make an enormous difference to those in need.

We will have baskets in Church, collecting donations up to and including 5th March 2023.



Or use the above ways at any time to donate.

But please also pray!

I am sure you are already doing so... but if this prayer helps, then please use it if you wish:

GOD OF time and space, we cry to you for your children, our neighbours, in southern Turkey and northern Syria, following the earth-quake that has devastated thousands of lives.

Only they and you know what it is like to experience such trauma in the middle of the night.

WE GIVE THANKS for the aid that is already being given and for the promises of help that have been made by many nations.

COMFORT, we pray, those who are trapped in collapsed buildings; those who have lost loved ones; those who wait for news and those digging through rubble to save others.

GRANT the gift of hope so that those caught between life and death know that you are with them and that others are ready to support them as they seek a future that overshadows the experiences of today.

WE ASK THIS in the Name of Jesus, who endured so much for love of them. **AMEN.**

Every Blessing
LISA x

PRAYER COMPANIONS

*Would you like
someone to pray with?*

Prayer Ministry will be offered at the end of the 10am Sunday Service
on the **FIRST** and **THIRD** Sunday of each month,
at the back of Church by the prayer candles.

*If you would like prayer at other times,
please do seek them out so they can pray for or with you.*

OUR REGULAR PRAYER MINISTERS:

ROSEMARY BOULTON



CAROLYN HAWKINS



JENNY BISHOP



ALTERNATIVELY: the following
individuals may also be available
depending on circumstances

Rev Lisa
Wigmore Vicar



Rev Sandy
Cooper



SUE CLEMENTS



LORRAINE SANDERSON



PETER ROBBINS



Rev Regan
Mears Curate





SCRIPTURE teaches us that God loves us with a never-ending love and nothing can ever separate us from the love of God.

It is important for us to outwardly show this love in caring and walking beside people.

Bristol Noise offers us an opportunity to take part in an event which enables us to display the love of God. In the past we have painted things, done gardening, cleared 'fly-tipping', and enabled free community events to take place—all to serve others and to spread the love of God.

So if this is for you, then please keep **Saturday 29th April** free.

Registering for this event will begin on the **5th of March** and I am planning to register us as a group so that we can all be together as a team. In order for me to do this, I would need details from each person so please do contact me or have a chat if you are interested.

There will also be a signing up sheet at the back of church in the upcoming weeks.

Telephone me 07 769 704 270 or email: r.meares_85@hotmail.co
Rev **Regan Meares** Curate

Join us for some
**COFFEE/
CHAT &
COMPANY**
Every first Wednesday
of the month at 11AM
in the Turnpike
on Soundwell Road.
A time to be, be known,
and be together!

TUESDAYS

9AM~12NOON



NOW that we are in to the winter season, and daytime temperatures are low, and until the weather improves, any and everyone* who wants a warm space to get out of the cold, have a hot drink and some friendly chat will be welcome to meet in the Church Room.

We look forward to seeing you!
Free Wi-Fi is available during your time with us.

*** PLEASE NOTE THAT UNDER 17s
MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN
ADULT IN ORDER TO ATTEND.**

WEDNESDAYS

7.30PM

LENT COURSE 2023

**Christ and the
Chocolaterie!**



**A 5-week
course starting
1st March**

TO help us see Him in the every-day, and to share Him with others, this year's Lent Course will follow the film 'Chocolat', and is entitled, *Christ and the Chocolaterie*.

It is meant to be fun, informative and filled with fellowship, prayer and reflection, each week with a mixture of video clips, Bible study and discussion.

We will meet for 5 Wednesday evenings during Lent at 7.30pm, finishing by 9.30pm, with the option of 7pm in the Church Room for tea and coffee beforehand.

If you can't attend each week, don't worry, just join in when you can, but please sign up!

CAR PARKING DISCLAIMER

WE are very grateful to Soundwell Academy for the occasional use of their car park outside of their usual hours.

Soundwell Academy and St Stephen's Church remind car park users that they will not accept any responsibility for accidents, damage or losses.

Please do be **extra careful** over the winter, during icy periods, as the car park will not always be treated with grit or salt.

Thank you!



**INTERNET ACCESS
is available at St Stephens:**

Locate the hotspot menu on
your device and choose:

STStephenGuest
THE PASSWORD IS:
stchurch

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

FOR SOME years now, a few people at St Stephens have been using collection boxes for loose change, at home, as a way of raising funds for **The Children's Society**.

These boxes were recently emptied and counted, and a total of **£715** was able to go to The Children's Society.

Thank you to all those that have contributed to that amazing total. The task of overseeing these boxes and the counting of the money (once a year, not too onerous) is done by a volunteer from the church, and we are pleased to say that Stella Hoare has recently offered to be the 'Box Coordinator'.

So we thank her for her willingness to enable the collecting for The Children's Society to continue.

PLANT SALE 20 MAY 2023



COUNTDOWN to the Plant Sale. 10am on Saturday 20th May.

Now is a good time to plant some seeds indoors, just keep them warm, damp and covered in polythene or cling film until they start to show.

Or perhaps think about taking cuttings from your house plants and hopefully they will all be ready for the sale.

I would also be grateful for items for prizes for the raffle: maybe you have an unwanted Christmas gift?

Thank you! **Gill Mayo**

The church also supports The Children's Society at Christmas, with the offertory at the two Christingle services being shared with them.

Here are a few words from The Children's Society, to give a little insight into the work they do for young people:

EVERY YOUNG PERSON DESERVES A GOOD CHILDHOOD.

That's why we fight for the hope and happiness of young people when it's threatened by abuse, exploitation and neglect.

We see the hope and courage in young people every day, and it inspires us to support them through their most serious life challenges.

Children's voices and opinions are at the heart of everything we do.



TO THOSE that have recently had their collection boxes returned, please do continue to raise money for this worthwhile cause.

If *anyone else* would like a box there are some spare ones at church.

Please speak to Stella about arranging this, either in church or by telephoning her on 9879613.

Should any of you wish to read a little more about the work they do, or donate in another way, then please visit The Children's Society website for more information:

www.childrenssociety.org.uk

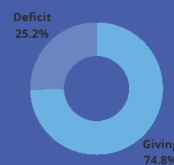
or else give them a telephone call on 0300 303 7000

Julia Merrifield

Our Church Financial Health



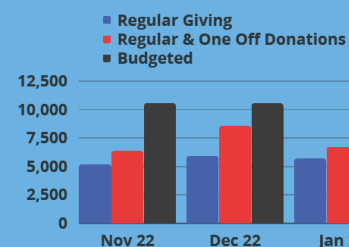
GIVING FOR JANUARY



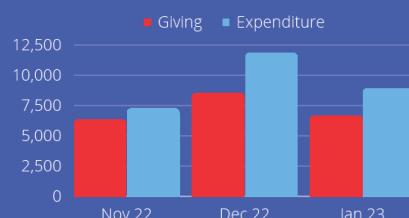
WHAT OUR
GIVING NEEDS TO
BE £10,500

GIVING RECEIVED
£5635

Giving Last 3 Months



Giving v Church Expenses Last 3 Months



Flower arranging at St Stephens

A SMALL group of ladies arrange the flowers weekly for our church and we would like to invite recruits to assist in our cause!

We meet up on Friday mornings at 9.30am for about 2 hours, in a rota of 3 persons per week, thus taking it in turns.

If you would like to join us then please contact Ruth, Jan Brookshaw or Joyce for more details!

The flowers on the altar and at the lectern are generously paid for by donations, and are often in memory of a loved one or special occasion.

There some dates available for lectern flowers, so please speak to the flower team if you would like to have your name added to the list.

Thank you!

MARCH CYCLE OF PRAYER BEGINNING SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK

05 Uganda Link:	Carolyn, Martin, Abbi & Jess Smith Louise, David, Owen & Rhys Stanton Margaret Stawte, Lois Stokes	Crispin Way Crossfield Road Crown Road
12 St Stephen's Infant & Junior Schools	Marlene Stone, Sheila Stone Nick Stott, Debbie & family Greta Summerill, Pat and Martyn Talbot	Crownleaze Deerhurst Deerswood
19 Kings Forest Primary School	Roy Tanner, Ivor Taylor Rita Thorne, Christine Tippet Vanessa and Nick Tippet	Eastleigh Close Eastleigh Road Elmore
26 Tynings Primary School	Ken and Gill Tizzard, Wayne and Nick Topps Jean Wadsworth, Mark Walker Darren, Kay, Lauren, Emily & Thomas Warr	Fairford Close Fairlyn Drive Florence Road

SUNDAY Community Worship Service at 10am

Sunday 8am BCP Holy Communion on 1st and 3rd Sundays.

WEDNESDAY Service of Holy Communion at 10am.

MARCH DIARY

01 Wednesday	11am 7.30pm*	Coffee/Chat/Company Turnpike Pub LENT Course starts in Church then weekly
02 Thursday(s)	10-11.45am 2-4pm	See & Know weekly in Church Hall Men's Group in Church Room then fortnightly
03 Friday	2pm 7-9pm	Pensioner's Group in Church Hall Outburst Youth Church in Church Hall (Monthly first Friday of the month)
04 Saturday	12 noon	Becky and Joe get married in Church
07 Tuesday	9am-12 noon 1.30-3.30pm	WARM SPACE in Church Room then weekly Knit & Natter weekly in the Church Room
08 Wednesday	7.30pm*	LENT Course continues in Church
09 Thursday(s)	2-4pm	Ladies Group in Church Hall then fortnightly
15 Wednesday	7.30pm*	LENT Course continues in Church
17 Friday	6.30pm	FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE in Church
22 Wednesday	7.30pm*	LENT Course continues in Church
29 Wednesday	7.30pm*	LENT Course final meeting in Church

* Optional 7pm Refreshments in the Church Room

APRIL DIARY in advance

04 Tuesday	9am-12 noon 1.30-3.30pm	WARM SPACE in Church Room then weekly Knit & Natter weekly in the Church Room
06 Thursday(s)	10-11.45am 2-4pm	See & Know weekly in Church Hall Men's Group in Church Room then fortnightly

FROM THE REGISTERS

SINCE JANUARY 2022

Baptisms:

• FEBRUARY 06: Hallie Alice Barrell.
Please hold Hallie's Mum and Dad, Jess and Ashley, her Godparents, Emma, Neil, Martyn and Kathryn, and all his family, especially his Grandad, John, in your prayers.

• FEBRUARY 19: Nola Grace Martin and Magnus William Martin.

Please hold Nola and Magnus' Mum and Dad, Abbie and Tony, their Godparents, Shane, Abbie, Emma, Ted, Eleanor and Ed, and all their family and friends in your prayers.

Funerals:

• FEBRUARY 01: Doris Kear (97).
The celebration of Doris' life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold all her close family members, as well as the wider family, and her many friends at Deerhurst Care Home and the community at Severn Beach in your prayers.

• FEBRUARY 13: Eileen Punter (90).
The celebration of Eileen's life was held at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Please hold Eileen's son, John with his wife Joy, and grandsons Martin with Murella and Mark with Beccy in your prayers.

• FEBRUARY 20: Tony Newton (86).
The celebration of Tony's life was held at South Bristol Crematorium.

Please hold his twin brother, Dave, and all the family, as well as Tony's many friends at both Cardell House and Kilvie House in your prayers.

SAINT STEPHENS SOUNDWELL



• Revd Lisa Wigmore
Vicar, 52 Gladstone Street
Soundwell, Bristol BS16 4RF
Telephone 0117 957 4297



• Revd Sandy Cooper
Associate Minister, 1 Deerhurst
Soundwell, Bristol BS15 1XH
Telephone 0117 967 2621



• Revd Regan Meares
Curate
Telephone 07769 704270



• Peter Robbins
Lay Minister, 13 Wood Road
Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8DT
Telephone 0117 967 9576



• Gill Mayo
Church Warden
Telephone
0117 956 9796



HOLY WEEK

Special Palm Sunday Service
10am 2nd April

Experience Easter Trail
from 3rd to 9th April

Maundy Thursday
6th April at 7.30pm

Good Friday 7th April

1pm: Quiet Reflection
2pm: Last Hour at the Cross

EASTER DAY 9th April

10am: All Ages Together
Service with Holy Communion



Dial-a-SERMON

Listen to this week's Sermon
on your phone:

0117 456 2090

(Cost is the same as a local call)

OR

Click-a-SERMON



Visit our website and use the
audio link to listen on-line

<http://saintstephensoundwell.org>